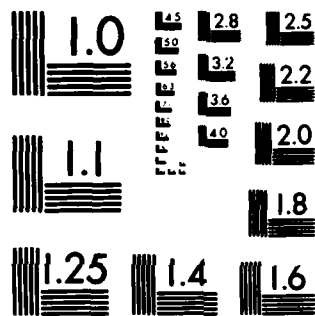


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USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM

TRAINING RECORDS ARE ESSENTIAL

INDIVIDUAL ESSAY

by

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TRAINING RECORDS ARE ESSENTIAL

Does the following sound familiar?

Bn Cdr: Lieutenant, what's the training status of your platoon? LT: Say again sir? Your know, how well trained are your soldiers on soldier's manual tasks and your squads and the platoon on ARTEP tasks? Oh! We're good sir! Are you weak on any particular tasks? Uh, yes sir, some. Which ones? NBC sir. Which NBC tasks? Most all sir. I see. Do you have a method of recording who is strong or weak on tasks and when they last did them? Sir, the platoon sergeant keeps all that at the CP (at the CP amid incomplete/missing job books). Lieutenant do you have a system which summarizes these job books to show which tasks are strong or weak for the entire platoon? No sir. We just look at everybody's job book and then tell the CO at training meetings what we want to train on. He puts it on the schedule for us. How about collective training for squads and the platoon, how do you keep track of that? They do that at company sir. The CO has an old ARTEP, and he writes notes on it. Do you have a list of your ARTEP tasks and what they consist of? No sir. The company just has one copy of the ARTEP and the CO keeps it.

Unsettling? Widespread? True at platoon and company level? Your answers may be different, but for me, as a battalion commander, the answers were too frequently yes.

To foster competition and esprit among platoons and to provide a snapshot of readiness at platoon level, we devised a no-notice platoon "roll-out." It consisted of many individual and unit readiness checks and included a training briefing to the battalion commander by the platoon leader and his squad leaders. Many of the initial briefings contained conversations similar to the one above. Several problems flow from this. First, at platoon, and frequently at company level, there is little knowledge of the Army training system, and there is no comprehensive, coherent training status available for individual and collective training,

no record or summary. If one asks a company commander the individual training status of his unit, and he produces 100 job books for evaluation, that is a problem. Without a platoon or company summary or synthesis of the 100 books, other than a gut feeling, the company commander does not truly know his individual training status. With the increase in complexity and volume of ARTEP 71-2, the same confused status is often true of collective training as well.

A second problem, not quite as obvious, is a general lack of awareness as to which individual tasks are taught in Basic, AIT, or OSUT. It is not uncommon to find units teaching disinterested individuals the same tasks in which they are proficient. Without knowledge of tasks which have been previously taught, and how well or poorly individuals have accomplished them, units blindly repeat the tasks. With time as limited as it is, we can ill-afford units repeating tasks already satisfactorily completed. The minimum price we pay is bored, bewildered soldiers, who wonder why they keep doing the same things over again if there is no need. Reference to a current Trainers Guide would solve this.

A third, and again not quite so obvious, problem is the crosswalk between individual and collective training. If platoon and company leaders are not competently recording individual and collective training with the use of job books, soldier's manuals and the ARTEP, it is unlikely they are aware of, or meaningfully emphasizing, individual training tasks which can be accomplished simultaneously with collective tasks. The new ARTEP 71-2 lays this out well, but in so doing, adds to the already considerable bulk of that volume.

Finally, and in my opinion, the largest problem which flows from all of this is confused, uncertain, bewildered leaders at platoon, and company. These leaders live in a high speed environment, at the neck of a funnel, so

to speak. The venturi effect causes daily events to become a blur. At the top of the funnel, battalion, brigade and division commanders, and their well-meaning staffs, pour bucket after bucket of varied requirements into the company funnel. The result, too often, is a confused, uncoordinated blur. Captains and lieutenants become frustrated and disheartened. Amidst this general confusion is a stack of soldier's manuals on one hand and an ARTEP on the other with no apparent time to accomplish all of the required training. In fact, the problems are so overwhelming and persistent one might reasonably ask, why bother to solve all this? The turnover rate of soldiers and leaders is so high that as soon as someone learns the system or becomes trained, they move to another assignment or leave the Army. As a result, unit and individual training is seldom past square one.

Accepting this argument is like quail hunting without a dog. One walks the entire countryside in search of a covey. When they fly up the hunter pumps three quick shots into the center of mass, hoping to hit something. If a bird is hit, it falls into grass and brush and may be lost. On the other hand, the smart hunter uses his dog to sniff out quail. Before they fly, he is poised and ready; he selects one or two birds as they fly up, downs them, and keeps track of where they fall. Next, he finds them with his dog. He then moves to where the quail landed, and with his dog, repeats the performance again and again. Amid the quail of soldier's manual and ARTEP tasks, the trainer without a dog is usually surprised as skill qualification test and formal ARTEP evaluations results fly up in front of him. Without a plan he takes unaimed shots at tasks as they arise, but he loses track of them and their future training relevance in the brush and grass of time. He departs the unit, and with the new commander's arrival, all starts from square one. However, the smart

trainer with a plan and assistance from subordinates is able to watch and record performance as a few selected tasks. As Skill Qualification Tests and ARTEPs occur, results are collected, and he is able to bag those tasks and pursue the remaining covey of soldier's manual and ARTEP tasks. He will never get them all, but his prospects for repeated success are certainly better than the haphazard pot shot taker, who soon loses track of past task performance, and is therefore ill prepared to meaningfully select tasks for future training.

There are at least four good reasons to solve these training problems. First, it will bring some order to the lieutenant's world. That may sound trite and even unnecessary, but if platoon leaders and company commanders firmly understood training, and a system for managing it successfully, they could remove part of the blur from their daily lives. If there is an assigned peg to hang soldier's manual and ARTEP results on, and a group of empty pegs for yet uncompleted tasks, company leaders would at least know where they have been and where they must go. Imagine how rewarding training could be if just 75 percent of all platoon leaders and company commanders knew their individual and unit training status and planned future training based on it. Soldiers would certainly be rewarded, and a major confusing factor in the junior officer's daily life would be removed.

A second reason for solving these training problems is that the confused leaders now at platoon level become the company commanders, S3s and battalion commanders of the future. If training is confusing, ill-conceived, and poorly executed by them now, there is a prospect it will remain so in the future.

The third, and in my opinion, the primary reason for solving these training problems is readiness. We simply can not tolerate a situation where poor individual and unit training exists in organizations which may

be sent to war. Poorly trained units generally lack confidence and esprit and fold quickly under stress. They lack confidence in themselves as individuals and as a unit. In fact, it is through professional, realistic, well-executed, challenging training that individual confidence and unit esprit are achieved. To settle for anything less is unacceptable.

Finally, we should solve the training problems mentioned because it is the only way to get the readiness job done. The battalion commander alone can not solve the problems. The commander and the S3, with a common system, can solve a few more of them. Add the company commander and platoon leaders and even a few squad leaders, and one finally has some prospect of solving the situation. Cohesion efforts underway will certainly help, but cohesion without a good training system and good records is a guarantee of continued mediocrity.

It is certain that all training will never be done. It is equally certain that the greater the number of competent leaders, working the problems with a common understanding of what must be done, the more likely a better solution will be achieved.

In devising a solution to these problems we need not reinvent the wheel. We do not need some new whiz-bang solution which the Army has never heard of and which we must now infuse into the system while saying, "Forget all the old stuff and use this new whiz-bang to solve all the problems." What we do need is pretty much like the system TRADOC now teaches, with a few local modifications as necessary, and a good deal more discipline and understanding. Specifically, we should teach leaders the system in schools. We should reinforce the system and keep it current for new leaders in units. Finally, we should actually use the system taught in schools, as locally modified, in units. This is not new, but it is tough to do in the varied, real world. That is where discipline comes in. In

addition, commanders must tell the school system what they need and request the training products necessary to properly conduct individual and collective training in units.

Let me outline what is needed in the way of records at platoon, company and battalion to properly plan training. Make no mistake, proper planning is no guarantee of proper execution. However, what it does guarantee is that units and individuals will know what they have trained on, and how well, and where they must head in future training.

First, as far as individual training is concerned, we need current job books for every individual in the battalion. The books need to jive with tasks in the soldier's manual, and they need to be posted with the soldier's current training status on each task. They need to be looked at by platoon leaders and company commanders and battalion commanders, with the soldiers present, to determine how soldiers are doing in training. Sham entries are obvious to spot. Ask the soldier, and he will tell you in most cases, or test a few soldiers informally or formally to determine if entries are correct. I am not advocating that individuals outside the battalion, like the IG, inspect job books. Nor am I suggesting that posted job books guarantee a trained soldier. But in an open, honest, non-threatening environment, they can be an invaluable aid in determining what individual training has been conducted and what is left to be done. Soldiers should be talked to at least once each month about the contents of their job book, preferably by someone who knows and cares about their training status. What should go in the job book? For sure it should be asterisked to show which tasks were performed in Basic, AIT, or OSUT. The results of how soldiers performed on those tasks should be made available from TRADOC training centers. In fact it would be nice if each new arrival came with an annotated job book. In any event, if test results are not available,

the unit should test new arrivals on selected tasks to see if they are proficient, and then make entries in the job book. SQT results should certainly be posted to the job book and discussed with the soldier at his monthly session. Next, all individual training results, collected from formal individual training or crosswalk training should be entered. It's not a bad idea to post an individual's weapon's serial number and zero in the job book as well.

Let us assume we have a reasonably good set of platoon job books on hand. They are fine for squad leaders to discuss with individual soldiers each month, but platoon leaders need to know if there are specific task strengths or weaknesses for the entire platoon. Is everyone in the platoon weak at donning the protective mask or zeroing the M16 or just a few? The answer to that will determine if there is a platoon training deficiency or selected individual training problems. The Army provides no neat chart for lieutenants to use in this case, but it is simple enough to devise one. Put it in a binder or hang on the wall. Forts Benning and Knox ought to devise something suitable for local adaptation and give it to lieutenants and captains as they leave training management courses.

Inclosure 1 is an example of such a chart. From analysis of this, platoon leaders could tell at a glance individual training deficiencies and strengths common to the platoon. They could easily determine tasks completed, remaining, those taught in Basic, AIT or OSUT and those on the last SQT. While this chart reflects tasks for an infantry platoon, similar charts for platoons with common MOSs or tasks could be easily devised. Any platoon leader who has had to do the research for devising this chart and honestly posting it weekly, after observing training, has learned not only a good bit about the individual training system but is quite aware of the individual training status of his platoon as well.

At company, a similar training status problem exists, but not as much detail is needed by the company commander to spot it. Inclosure 2 is a proposed chart which permits company commanders to determine at a glance the tasks evaluated, the date tested, the number tested, and the percent GO on each task. If honestly updated at weekly training meetings with the assistance of platoon leaders, company commanders would have a much better feeling for the unit's individual training status. They would be more likely to select tasks for training which were either deficient or had not been trained on before. They would also know whether the company has training problems or, by consulting platoon records, a platoon or selected individual training problem.

An identical chart at battalion for selected MOSs will tell the Bn Commander his unit's individual training status as well. Inclosure 3. By consulting with company commanders at weekly training meetings he can pretty well determine which tasks need his attention and resources and which are better left to companies and platoons.

This individual training system need not aim at 100 percent accuracy. It will never be "zero defects." It need not cover every MOS in the company or battalion. But if it is even 80 percent correct for the high density MOSs in a unit, it is an invaluable training management aid. Too much work? Too unreliable? Only solves part of the problem? What is the alternative? No records at all? Hunting quail without a dog? Taking pot shots at individual tasks as they come to our attention from SQT results? At the outset I mentioned discipline was vitally necessary to make the system work. TRADOC used to say we should never train without evaluating, and we should never evaluate without training. I think we should add never evaluate training without making a record of it so that one knows where he

has been and where he needs to go. The discipline, integrity and persistent effort needed to make such a system even 80 percent accurate will not bankrupt anyone. If honestly undertaken, it will greatly improve individual training management in any unit willing to underwrite the effort. What is more, everyone will be talking off of the same sheet of music and pulling in the same direction. That alone ought to remove some blur from each junior leader's life.

The system for recording collective training is a modification of two excellent student texts developed for basic and advanced officers at Fort Benning (ST-21-188-1, ST-21-1-188-2). In fact, as I write, someone at the Infantry School is probably updating the older versions to accommodate the new ARTEP 71-2 if they have not already done so. Nevertheless for those who may not have access to such texts the following may be helpful.

The truths about recording or not recording individual training mentioned earlier are generally true for collective training as well. That is, no handy system for recording results from squad through Bn is uniformly available. Mechanized infantry and armor battalions throughout the Army may all have different systems. Some may methodically record each task, how and when it was last performed, and thereby give the commander at each level an idea of where the unit has been and where it needs to go. Ideally these same records could be passed to incoming commanders so they would know the same. However, all too often, particularly at platoon and company, there is little record of collective training. Most of what is available has usually been provided as a result of "last year's ARTEP." While the conversation at the beginning of this article focused on individual training records, it could just as easily have applied to collective training. Since that conversation started at the platoon level with individual training, let us start there for collective training as well.

The first page of ARTEP 71-2 is a table of contents which lists every squad and platoon task. Armed with that a platoon leader could devise a record similar to that in inclosure 4. If he posted it with data from every formal and informal training evaluation, he would have a clear picture of where his squads and the platoon stood with regard to collective training. Taken, warts and all, to company training meetings it would be an immense assistance to company commanders in developing training programs. Once again, looking at posted results is no guarantee of trained squads or platoons. However, it is an excellent roadmap of what has been done. If honestly kept, it may be a better indicator of training status than "gut feelings" by assembled leaders, trying to remember how well or poorly things went on particular tasks six months or a year ago.

At company level the record is a bit more complex, but not much. On page 1 of ARTEP 71-2 is a list of company tasks as well as squad and platoon tasks. The company commander should be able to devise a chart as shown in inclosure 5. From this he is able to tell at a glance, for each of his squads and platoons, where they have been and where they need to go. In my personal experience these company training records for collective and individual training were invaluable as company commanders accomplished two functions. The first was training management, and the second was change of command.

First, at company training meetings squad and platoon leaders were singing off the same sheet of music. They were discussing the same individual and collective tasks and posting sometimes varied results on identical training records. Many times the discussion drifted to training standards and conditions as well. The result was well-informed, coordinated company training leadership. Newcomers were brought on board quickly because training meetings focused on the Army training system at company

level, as built around the soldier's manual and ARTEP. When squad, platoon, or company leaders changed, the outgoing leader left a recorded legacy of training events accomplished, and the incoming leader inherited a set of records indicating where individuals and the unit had been, and where they needed to go. In every case possible, changes of leadership not only included a property inventory but a training management briefing as well. While one need not blindly believe every entry on inherited training records, they are dramatically better than causing every individual and unit to return to "square one" each time a new leader arrives.

At battalion a chart as indicated in inclosure 6 is recommended. It lists the major Bn/TF missions and can be posted as results are obtained from formal and informal evaluations. Since the primary tasks now have numerous subtasks, one may wish to supplement the chart by listing subtasks as well. To complete the battalion training picture the commander may request company commanders to provide a monthly update on squad, platoon and company training. A simple reproduction of company collective training charts would suffice. In most cases, however, this will probably not be necessary, since weekly battalion training meetings and training evaluations/testing sponsored by battalion will provide substantial input.

In closing I would like to address where leaders should obtain the information they post on training records. I mentioned earlier we should never train without evaluating and never evaluate without training. Most of these evaluations will be informal. They will occur as daily training is accomplished. They will be conducted by leaders from squad through division, and results may be written or verbal. All of the results have some value, and should be considered for posting to records. Certainly test results should be posted to the records. They are a good indication of how valid our informal evaluations may have been. Written test results

should be filed with individual or collective records at the appropriate level. For example, if a formal platoon ARTEP evaluation is conducted, results should be written as recommended in ARTEP 71-2 or on a reproduced page of the ARTEP itself, and filed with platoon training records. The same applies from squad through battalion. Taken as a whole, the proposed records from inclosure 1 through 6 constitute a helpful means for better managing Army training.

MOS 11B
INDIVIDUAL TRAINING RECORD
MECHANIZED INFANTRY PLATOON

	FIRST AID					NUCLEAR, BIOLOGICAL, CHEMICAL												
SOLDIERS MANUAL TASKS	081-831-1004	081-831-1005	081-831-1006	081-831-1007	081-831-1008			092-503-1001	092-503-1002	092-503-1010	092-503-1015	092-503-1007	092-503-1008	092-503-1014	092-503-1006	092-503-1009	092-503-1005	(ETC, 4 or 5 PAGES)
NAMES																		
FIRST SQUAD																		
SECOND SQUAD																		
THIRD SQUAD																		
DATE																		

Inclosure 1

• = OSUT

S = SQT

MOS 11B
INDIVIDUAL TRAINING RECCRD
MECHANIZED INFANTRY COMPANY
AND BATTALION

SOLDIERS MANUAL TASKS	FIRST AID					NUCLEAR, BIOLOGICAL, CHEMICAL										(ETC, 4 or 5 PAGES)
	•	•	•		S				•		S					
	081-831-1004	081-831-1005	081-831-1006	081-831-1007	081-831-1008	092-503-1001	092-503-1002	092-503-1010	092-503-1015	092-503-1007	092-503-1008	092-503-1014	092-503-1006	092-503-1009	092-503-1005	092-503-1003
No. TESTED																
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100																
90																
80																
70																
60																
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40																
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20																
10																
0																

Inclosure 2

• = OSUT

S = SQT

MOS 11B
INDIVIDUAL TRAINING RECORD
MECHANIZED INFANTRY COMPANY
AND BATTALION

SOLDIERS MANUAL TASKS	FIRST AID					NUCLEAR, BIOLOGICAL, CHEMICAL										(ETC, 4 or 5 PAGES)	
	•	•	•		S			•		S							
	081-831-1004	081-831-1005	081-831-1006	081-831-1007	081-831-1008		092-503-1001	092-503-1002	092-503-1010	092-503-1015	092-503-1007	092-503-1008	092-503-1014	092-503-1006	092-503-1009	092-503-1005	092-503-1003
No. TESTED																	
DATE																	
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80																	
70																	
60																	
50																	
40																	
30																	
20																	
10																	
0																	

Inclosure 3

• = OSUT

S = SQT

COLLECTIVE TRAINING RECCRD
MECHANIZED INFANTRY PLATOON

SQUAD ARTEP MISSIONS

	DATE	SQD EVAL	PLAT EVAL	CO EVAL	BN EVAL	OTHER/REMARKS
MOVE						
ATTACK						
DEFEND						
FIRING PROFICIENCY EXERCISE						
CONDUCT ANTIARMOR AMBUSH						

PLATOON ARTEP MISSIONS

	DATE	PLAT EVAL	CO EVAL	BN EVAL	OTHER	REMARKS
MOVE						
ATTACK						
DEFEND						
ATTACK (LIVE FIRE)						
DEFEND (LIVE FIRE)						

S= Satisfactory
U= Unsatisfactory
T= Fully trained

P= Practice needed
H= Substantial training
?= Status unknown

Inclosure 4

**COLLECTIVE TRAINING RECORD
MECHANIZED INFANTRY COMPANY**

SQUAD ARTEP MISSIONS

	DATE	SQD EVAL	PLAT EVAL	CO EVAL	BN EVAL	OTHER/REMARKS
MOVE						
ATTACK						
DEFEND						
FIRING PROFICIENCY EXERCISE						
CONDUCT ANTIARMOR AMBUSH						

PLATOON ARTEP MISSIONS

	DATE	PLAT EVAL	CO EVAL	BN EVAL	OTHER	REMARKS
MOVE						
ATTACK						
DEFEND						
ATTACK (LIVE FIRE)						
DEFEND (LIVE FIRE)						

COMPANY ARTEP MISSIONS

	DATE	CO EVAL	BN EVAL	BDE EVAL	OTHER	REMARKS
MOVE						
ATTACK						
DEFEND						

S= Satisfactory
U= Unsatisfactory
T= Fully trained

P= Practice needed
H= Substantial training
?= Status unknown

Inclosure 5

**COLLECTIVE TRAINING RECORD
MECHANIZED INFANTRY BATTALION**

GENERAL MISSIONS

	DATE	BN EVAL	BDE EVAL	DIV EVAL	OTHER	REMARKS
PLAN AND CONTROL COMBAT OPNS						
MAINTAIN OPNS SECURITY						
PERFORM TACTICAL INTEL						
CONDUCT NBC DEFENSIVE OPNS						
DEFEND AGAINST AIR ATTACK						
CONDUCT SUSTAINING OPNS						

BATTALION TASK FORCE MISSIONS

MOVE						
ATTACK						
DEFEND						

COMMAND, CONTROL, COMMO, MISSIONS

PERFORM STAFF INTEL FUNCTIONS						
PERFORM STAFF PLANNING FUNCTIONS						
OPERATE THE BN/TF COMMAND POST						

COMBAT SERVICE SUPPORT MISSIONS

PERFORM STAFF ADMIN/PERSONNEL FUNCTIONS						
PERFORM STAFF LOGISTICS FUNCTIONS						
OPERATE BN/TF TRAINS						

SUPPLEMENTAL MISSIONS

ATTACK AN URBAN AREA						
DEFEND AN URBAN AREA						
CONDUCE A HASTY RIVER CROSSING						
CONDUCT A DELIBERATE RIVER CROSSING						

S= Satisfactory
U= Unsatisfactory
T= Fully trained

P= Practice needed
H= Substantial training
?= Status unknown

DATE
ILME